



## INTERNET POLICY

### Introduction:

In providing opportunities for enlarging informational needs of the public, the Washington County Library continues to expand the range of tools available to its patrons. It is difficult to subject information from electronic sources to the same level of scrutiny as is used to select traditional information sources and materials for the library. However, because the information accessed at the library does flow into a public space on publicly owned equipment, there is an inherent obligation to set limits on the use of these resources and to respond to issues related to their use within the context of other library policies, procedures and practices.

It is the intention of this policy to provide equitable access to electronic information sources while maintaining the security of the county library computer systems. The use of electronic sources must also fit within the library's mission and strategic plan, its commitment to meeting the needs of individual patrons, and its role as an agency of the Washington County government.

These policies shall be reviewed as changes in technology, software programs, patron expectations, and relevant laws dictate.

### Policies:

- I. Electronic information sources are intended to complement other library sources in providing in-depth reference and information services. The library also permits some uses which have become common options for users of the Internet although these uses are not directly related to traditional library services. Uses of the Internet which are not permitted are chat rooms, and game playing. Patrons are prohibited from creating personal folders, bookmarks, system passwords, or other individualized files on computer hard drives. The library director has authority to limit permitted uses on library computers as necessary to accommodate a variety of patron needs and to maintain the library's primary emphasis on the use of the Internet to access reference and information sources.
- II. The library has no direct control over the information accessed through the Internet. Therefore, each individual is responsible for the content of the searches he or she conducts, and parents are responsible for the use of the Internet by their minor children. However, the library does take measures, based on legal guidance and within the limits of available technology, to restrict minors from accessing, or being exposed to, visual depictions which are pornographic, obscene, or harmful to minors due to sexual content. Therefore, software to protect against these actions is installed on all library computers. Such software may be disabled by staff members, upon request by an adult, to enable Internet access for research or other lawful purposes. The library staff will manage the computer area in accordance with the awareness that minors frequent the area and the precept that minors should not be exposed to certain types of visual depictions.

- III. With the advent of wireless communication, electronic devices may be used in locations of the library other than the library patron computer area. All policies listed herein, relative to the use of electronic information sources within the library, apply to the use of laptop computers or any other wireless technologies while being used in the library.
- IV. Enforcement of these policies, consistent with the requirements of Utah Code Annotated, §§ 9-7-215 and 9-7-216 (1953, as amended), and State Rule 223-2, are based on guidelines and procedures adopted by the Washington County Library Board. The guidelines and procedures for enforcement of this policy are available for public review at all branches. Patrons are presumed to have read and agreed to abide by them before proceeding to use such sources. Signage will also clearly indicate that a complete copy of the library policies and procedures is available for review upon request.
  - a. In undertaking an effort to provide information sources and to protect minors from harmful exposure, the library remains aware of and promotes the right of adults to access information and to conduct inquiries with as few limitations as possible, consistent with the library's mission, its operation as a public space, and its goals and objectives. Violation of policies and procedures of the library system or violation of local, state, or federal law may result in prosecution, loss of library Internet privileges, or revocation of library cards.
- V. Patrons may not use equipment owned by the library for online gambling, commercial activities (profit or non-profit), accessing pornographic materials, displaying such materials which may be harmful to minors due to sexual content, or any illegal purposes, the violation of which will result in the suspension of Internet privileges.
- VI. The following activities are specifically prohibited:
  - a. Loading or downloading files or computer programs.
  - b. Using any software, not owned by the Library, to install programs, or upload/download software or information from personal computer discs, CD-ROMS, flash drives or the Internet.
  - c. Installing or connecting unauthorized technical devices, changing system or software configurations, installing any software of any type, disconnecting hardware, installing hardware, or changing hardware configurations.
  - d. Engaging in any activity intended to compromise system security, interfere with the proper operation of, or compromise the security of other computers or network systems, compromise the privacy of other users, or obstruct the work of others.
- VII. Using a computer system to send forged e-mail, bulk mail, unsolicited voluminous or frequent e-mail, illegally share copyrighted materials with others, or to fraudulently misrepresent the user's identity in any communications.
- VIII. Chat rooms and game playing.
- IX. Creating personal folders, bookmarks, system passwords, or other individualized files.

- X. If you use someone else's library card to access the Internet on the library's computers (except for a parent accessing the Internet for pre-school age children), you and the cardholder may lose your Internet and other library privileges.
- XI. The library does not guarantee privacy of any information that is viewed on our computers or transmitted via the Internet. This includes things like document contents, passwords, account numbers, e-mail messages, etc.
- XII. Any person who is disturbing others in the computer area may be asked to leave.
- XIII. Non-residents and visitors without a library card will be charged a fee. The fee must be paid before the use of the Internet begins.
- XIV. The Washington County Library Board has established procedures and guidelines to handle complaints about this policy, enforcement of this policy by library staff, and what a patron should do if they observe inappropriate behavior by another library patron. A notice of the availability of these procedures for public review will be posted, as well as the policies made readily available to all staff members.

**Note:** Individuals with concerns or questions relative to these policies may submit a written request to the Library Director. Any such request will be considered by the Director and/or the Library Board.

/s/ Douglas D. Alder  
Library Board Chairperson

/s/ Britton MG Lund  
Library Director

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